THE ZONE D'ÉDUCATION PRIORITAIRE:
Why French Legislators Revived a 1981 Public Education Program in the Wake of Mass Youth Riots

Megan L. Silver

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Heather G. Pelletier, Ph.D.
Department of French and Italian
Supervising Professor

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Judith G. Coffin, Ph.D.
Department of History
Second Reader

Abstract

Author: Megan L. Silver

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Supervising Professor: Heather G. Pelletier, Ph.D.

This paper is public policy analysis that looks into the design and history of the French Zone d'Éducation Prioritaire (ZEP) program in order to understand why policymakers revived the program in the wake of 2006 mass youth riots. The ZEP policy espoused principles of positive discrimination, or affirmative action, in French primary and secondary schools. First enacted under socialist president François Mitterand, the ZEP policy changed both the nature and purpose of French education. Previously, France's education system had been one for the elite, its policies designed to provide academic studies to a few and vocational training to the rest. In the early 1980s, however, Mitterand's government implemented a policy known as the Zone d'Education Prioritaire policy, thereby providing extra funding, resources, and specific services to students in low-income areas. A program that exists to this day, the ZEP policy created a form of positive discrimination that politicians hoped would lead to greater equity among French students in secondary schools and beyond. My paper examines why and how policymakers have maintained this hope, relying on ZEPs as a reform to improve conditions in suburban public housing projects among students of low-income and often minority status in the twenty-first century.

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Introduction

On the evening of October 27, 2005, Bouna Traoré and Zyed Benna headed home for a Ramadan meal. The fifteen and seventeen-year-old boys had just finished a pickup game in Clichy-sous-Bois, the public-housing neighborhood north of Paris where they lived.[1,2] Having stood too close to private property on their route home, Traoré, Benna, and ten additional boys fell victim to a police complaint, made supposedly out of concern for their safety. Officers arrived with dogs and rubber-ball pistols, and the teenagers began to run. Some hid behind cars; others made it home; some, the police caught on site.[3] Traoré and Benna, however, experienced the worst fate: they hid in a transformer at an electrical substation and died by electrocution, killed instantly by over three thousand volts. Even worse, the police present failed to follow or search for the boys. Instead, help arrived hours later, when a concerned local placed a single emergency call. Bouna's brother, Siyakha Traoré, remembers how cars burned that night "out of love for [the boys'] blood," love for their entire community.[4] But it wasn't just these boys the community mourned. The events of October 27, 2005 became part of a pattern of police brutality against citizens of African origins. North African Malik Oussekine killed at a student demonstration in 1986; Seventeen-year-old Makomé M'Bowolé shot in the face during a police interrogation following a minor infraction in 1993; Four more dead after resisting possibly abusive identity checks in 2001.[5] These examples give glimpses of the violence that

[1] Maboula Soumahoro, "On the Test of the French Republic as Taken (and Failed)," *Transition* 98 (2008): 46, Project MUSE.
[2] Angelique Chrisafis, "The Trial that Could Lay Bare France's Racial Divide," *The Guardian*, March 15, 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/15/trial-france-racial-divide.
[3] Soumahoro, "On the Test," 46.
[4] Ibid., 48.
[5] Ibid., 45.

marginalized French youth experienced in their daily lives. Siyakha Traoré agrees that "had it not been for the cars burning, this would have been just another story in the news."[6] At first, the Clichy-sous-Bois community mourned quietly. Local youth held peaceful demonstrations. Within several days, however, some of the worst rioting in forty years erupted in suburban public-housing complexes throughout France. By week's end, more than 9,000 vehicles were set ablaze, and dozens of public buildings had burned to the ground.[7, 8,9]

It would *seem* that Traoré and Benna's deaths were the root cause of suburban riots in 2005 France. This is a reasonable assumption because in 2005, public-housing complexes were similar throughout the nation. I mean to say that Clichy-sous-Bois's location and residents had a lot in common with those in other public-housing sites. As a neighborhood, Clichy-sous-Bois was filled with public-housing facilities; it had high concentrations of minorities and immigrants; it was located at the Northern edge of Paris. Likewise, other public-housing complexes resided in the suburbs of dense cities and had large minority and immigrant populations. These similarities created a collective identity and experience that extended beyond the physical bounds of each *banlieue*, or suburban-housing neighborhood. As a result, Benna and Traoré's deaths could have easily gone from a local to national tragedy. Minorities living in public-housing projects could have protested the boys' devastating fate, as if to protest the demise of their own community members.[10] Still, the tragedy did not directly result in riots.

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[6] Ibid., 48.
[7] Ibid., 49.
[8] Chrisafis, "The Trial that Could Lay Bare."
[9] Angelique Chrisafis, "Nothing's Changed: 10 years after French riots, *banlieues* remain in crisis," *The Guardian*, October 22, 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/22/nothings-changed-10-years-after-french-riots-banlieues-remain-in-crisis.
[10] Alec G. Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'race' and Ethnicity in Contemporary France*, (New York: Routledge, 1995), 75.

Instead, the French government's callous, insensitive responses to Traoré and Benna's deaths functioned as the more specific cause of upheaval in the *banlieues*. This is evident because mass-youth outbursts did not begin until *after* the French government blamed the boys for their own deaths, then lied about police actions in the public forum. These kinds of knee-jerk responses – which shifted blame from law enforcement to minority youth –revealed the uprisings not as acts of grief or senseless violence, but as a statement of political discontent.[11] Put more simply, suburban youth burned buildings and cars as a means to gain national attention: to insist that the status quo treatment of suburban communities could no longer stand. Mass riots thus spoke to a range of systemic problems and grievances concerning French public housing and its occupants.[12,13]

French legislators responded with a range of reforms that addressed various *banlieues* conditions, as well as law enforcement outcomes, but one reform initiative did not fit the mold: a renewal of *Zones d'Education Prioritaire*.[14] Enacted in 1981 and revived twice in the twentieth century, the *Zones d'Education Prioritaire* (ZEP) policy provisioned additional funds for secondary schools in designated priority zones. Administrators supposedly selected priority zones on the basis of a community's average income bracket, prioritizing neighborhoods with the lowest average incomes and therefore greatest economic disadvantages. A first attempt at positive discrimination on the basis of economic status, ZEPs attempted to improve school outcomes for impoverished children by spending more on those with less. In theory, such a goal would promote *égalité des chances*, or the idea that all students deserve an equal opportunity for

[11] Soumahoro. "On the Test," 50.
[12] Chrisafis, "The Trial that Could Lay Bare."
[13] Chrisafis, "Nothing's Changed."
[14] Caroline Hendrie, "In the Wake of Riots, France Refashions Priority Zones; Policy targets resources to the most disadvantaged middle schools," *Education Week*, November 1, 2006, Gale Databases.

academic success. The implicit assumption is that academic success leads to later economic success and ultimately, a chance at vertical mobility among low-income children. According to the prior policy description, the only apparent connection between ZEPs and *banlieues* improvement is that most public housing projects have extremely low-income brackets. The riots of 2005, however, had little to do with the nature or conditions of public education. French Sociologist Maboula Soumahoro agrees that "suburban and student" are two disparate identifiers, which "appear to be…mutually exclusive."[15] The revival of ZEPs is even more confusing because in the twentieth-century, the program had many shortcomings. Research shows that it did not significantly improve student outcomes, nor did it ever receive an official line in the Ministry of Education's budget.[16, 17] These factors suggest that the program was both unsuccessful and unimportant. Furthermore, ZEPs had few effective enforcement mechanisms to ensure schools were making effective and impactful changes.[18] As a result, the program received little to no national attention between its original enactment and its first, then second renewals.[19] Thus, we have a conundrum. In the twentieth-century, ZEPs attempted to help economically-disadvantaged students achieve better academic outcomes with limited success. In the early twenty-first century, policymakers again revived ZEPs to help economically- *and* racially-disadvantaged youth achieve better community outcomes in suburban public housing. This represents a drastic shift in the purpose of priority education and furthermore a perplexing revival of an apparently unsuccessful policy. It is even more drastic and perplexing because the

[15] Soumahoro. "On the Test," 53.
[16] Roland Bénabou, Francis Kramarz, and Corinne Prost, "The French zones d'éducation prioritaire: Much ado about nothing?," *Economics of Education Review* 28 (2009): 346.
[17] Denis Maguain, "Discrimination positive: un bilan des experiences américaines et européennes," *Revue française d'économie* 2, no. 21 (2006): 186.
[18] Viviane Isambert-Jamati, "Les choix éducatifs dans les zones prioritaires," *Revue française de sociologie* 31, no. 1 (1990): 96.
[19] Bénabou et al., "The French zones d'éducation prioritaire," 346.

most recent ZEP renewal occurred in 1997, only nine years prior to the policy's post-millennial revamp. The sudden shift in the function of ZEPs and its generally unsuccessful twentieth-century results led me to my project's central questions. **Why did the ZEP program change focus from improving student outcomes to improving *banlieues* outcomes? What about the program's design and history allowed for it to shift goals with relative ease? Moreover, if it did not work, why did policymakers bring it back?**

Methods

Time for a bit of honesty. I am not a French citizen. I have little previous public-policy research experience, and going into this project, I wanted to learn about educational inequities in France to make a comparison with the United States. I chose to focus on the ZEP program because it is a prime example of how French legislators combat issues of racial injustice somewhat differently than we do here (see chapter 4). In fact, as I discuss in chapter four, it is *illegal* under French constitutional law to distinguish citizens on the basis of race. This posed a difficult problem after the infamous 2005 riots, which brought issues of police brutality, "crime racialization," and general racial discrimination to the fore of French political discourse.[20] I wanted to understand how the ZEP program could help resolve these issues. Furthermore, I wanted to know if ZEPs really addressed racial tensions and inequities, or if they merely glossed over problems: creating a semblance of government action, while simultaneously steering clear of the controversial topics at hand. To find the answers I desired, I looked into educational policies that preceded ZEPs, then tried to get a sense of how the program evolved over time. I used this method because I wanted to prove that in 2006, priority education truly attempted to

[20] Soumahoro, "On the Test," 53.

improve outcomes for economically- *and* racially- disadvantaged children and communities, despite its prior economic-disparity focus and lack of success.

My ultimate conclusion is twofold. First, French education policy increased focus on student economic and racial disparities throughout the twentieth-century, making the shift from ZEPs for improved student outcomes to ZEPs for improved *banlieues* outcomes an unsurprising transition. Second, although ZEPs were rather unsuccessful in the twentieth-century, with each program revival, they focused more on children of the *banlieues*. In this way, ZEPs addressed *banlieues* issues – pumped money into suburban communities – without directly implicating racial status as a factor of socioeconomic disadvantage. I reach these two conclusions by examining how education policies evolved over the second half of the twentieth century. Between 1946 and 1999, education policies have provided increasing amounts of implicit and explicit aid for economically- *and* racially-disadvantaged students. 1946 is my starting year because it is the first of the Post-World War II Era. To clarify, whenever I use the term Post-War in this paper, I am referring to the *Trentes Glorieuses*, the period between 1945 and 1975 in France. From 1946-1980, relevant education policies promoted the ***école unique***, or idea that one school program could provide an identical education for all French students (see chapter 1). From 1981 – 1999, education programs began to promote ***égalité des chances***, or equal opportunity for success across *economic* lines (see chapter 3). An analysis of programs, campaigns, and political discourse surrounding *égalités des chances* between 1981 and modern times further reveals that programs for positive discrimination often considered the needs of racially-disadvantaged youth in *banlieues* communities *tacitly*. Twentieth-century policymakers merely refused to admit this outright (see chapter 4). Thus, in 2006, the apparent shift from ZEPs for improved student outcomes to ZEPs for improved *banlieues* outcomes is **not really a shift at**

all. As a result, the policy's actual success rates were less important than **the very powerful idea** that academic excellence could catalyze vertical mobility and improve life outcomes for youth "trapped" in the *banlieues* and acting out to prove it.[21] Put another way, twentieth-century school aims underlie the 2006 ZEP revival. The policy's "new" post-millennial focus is rather a more direct acknowledgement that ZEPs attempt to improve outcomes for children at an economic *and* racial disadvantage.

Chapter 1

In Pursuit of the *École Unique*: French Education Policy, 1946-1980

In this chapter, I examine policy trends in French education between 1946 and 1980. I believe that these trends reveal an increasing commitment to an école-unique model for French schools. This model demonstrates policymakers' expanded conception of formal equality in public education. I argue that such an expanded conception indirectly paved the way for policies promoting égalité des chances, or equal opportunity for academic success.

Key Terms and Background – Formal Equality, Student Tracking, *École Unique*

In the first half of the twentieth century, policies promoting formal equality tended to focus on creating like schools, rather than like student experiences. Formal equality refers to the idea that every child will receive the same schooling and in theory, the same education. Furthermore, formal equality represents one of the most basic tenets of French education, since France is historically famous for its insistence upon centrally-controlled schools, or rather schools that follow procedures and instructions defined at the national level.[22] To understand the nature of French education policies promoting formal equality, consider the following examples. The Ministry of Education sets uniform curriculum, creates a common core, defines universal

[21] Sébastian Compagnon, "Présidentielle: La 'discrimination positive' s'invite à nouveau dans le débat," *Le Parisien*, March 13, 2017, http://www.leparisien.fr/elections/presidentielle/presidentielle-la-discrimination-positive-s-invite-a-nouveau-dans-le-debat-13-03-2017-6758190.php.

[22] Anne Corbett and Bob Moon, *Education in France: Continuity and Change in the Mitterand Years, 1981-1995*, (New York: Routledge, 1996), 45.

teacher directives, and evaluates children on the basis of standardized state tests. These policies uphold the principles of formal equality because they demonstrate a commitment – large or small – to an identical education across *all schools*, regardless of demographics or location. **In the early to mid-twentieth century**, a focus on creating identical schools did not necessarily entail an emphasis on identical student experiences. Put more simply, policies promoting formal equality attempted to provide each student with the same education through the creation of *uniform schools*. As for the individual child moving through the education system, his experience varied based upon the program into which he was "tracked."

While policies for formal equality attempted to create like schools, rigid tracking programs established opposing student pathways. Student tracking programs are designed to sort children into academic and vocational "tracks" depending on the academic proficiency they exhibit.[23] In the first half of the twentieth century, French tracking programs began at the completion of primary grades; eleven-year olds took standardized ability tests to determine the remainder of their school careers. After receiving a single test score, students would move to secondary education on one of three tracks. Academic studies prepared youth for university; professional training prepared them for work in industrial management; and skills-based training functioned like trade school.[24] Those on the academic track would finish their studies by taking the *baccalauréat*, or high school exit exam determining eligibility for universities. Others would enter the job market upon completion of their training, and as late as the 1950s, the majority of students did. In fact, throughout the decade only five percent of the total student body

[23] Micheline Gioanni, "Problems in French Education," *Educational Horizons* 34, no. 3 (Spring 1956): 197.

[24] Pierre Roche, "1947, le plan Langevin-Wallon pour une école de justice et d'émancipation," *l'Humanité*, June 16, 2017, https://www.humanite.fr/1947-le-plan-langevin-wallon-pour-une-ecole-de-justice-et-demancipation-637461.

matriculated to university.[25] In a very real sense, elementary academic outcomes determined student futures, and thus rigid tracking systems limited formal equality both in schools and in broader society. Sociologist Katherine Anderson-Levitt agrees that the education system of Pre-World War II France had a primary program for the masses and a secondary program for the elite.[26] In other words, the primary program supported formal equality among students; the secondary program did not. The *école-unique* model attempted to resolve this ideological conflict. It worked create a singular school system for all.

First discussed in the Post-War period, an *école-unique* model demonstrated an expanded conception of formal equality in that it promoted identical schooling for each child in both primary *and* secondary settings. To clarify, policies promoting the *école-unique* supported the idea that formal equality should have a democratic purpose, that there should be *one* comprehensive school system to serve every French child. As a policy goal, the *école-unique* model encompasses all the principles of formal equality; it merely expands upon them to provide a more identical education to students of any academic aptitude. Since France has always relied on student tracking as a means to promote realistic and gainful employment for graduating students, tracking programs did not disappear from the nation's educational practice. Student tracking ensured that those less likely to succeed academically could still find employment after secondary school. The presence of tracking eliminates the possibility of identical schooling across all individuals. This is why any changes made to promote the *école unique*, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century, do not necessarily promote *complete* formal equality. Policymakers of this era (and today, honestly) had to balance a desire for more democratic

[25] Gioanni, "Problems in Education," 197.

[26] Katherine Anderson-Levitt, Régine Sirota, and Martine Mazurier, "Elementary Education in France," *The Elementary School Journal* 92, no. 1 (1991): 80.

schools with a need to sustain economic stability and provide employment for all citizens. Nonetheless, the one-school-for-all model underpinned multiple education policies between 1946 and 1980. These policies provided every student more years in school and more years dedicated to an academic education. In the following sub-section, I examine two case policy examples: the *Plan Langevin-Wallon* and the school reforms of 1963. Both reform programs illustrate how the ideological aims of the *école unique* manifested in mid- to late-twentieth-century school policies.

Brief Policy Examples: *Plan Langevin-Wallon* (1946) and School Reforms of 1963

While the Plan Langevin-Wallon did not eliminate student tracking programs, it did promote the *école unique* by providing compulsory education to all students through age eighteen. Compulsory education has existed in France since the 1880s, the Ferry laws insisting that schooling be "obligatory, secular, and free" for all.[27] The amount of schooling varied, however, on the basis of a student's school track. Children on management or vocational tracks left school at age fifteen to begin working. Children on the academic track instead continued their studies through age eighteen, preparing to take the *baccalauréat* and hopefully pursue a university education. The *Plan Langevin-Wallon* did not alter the tracking system in any way. Still, by allowing all children to attend secondary schools through age eighteen, the program made secondary-student experiences more similar. In a small way, it promoted formal equality on the individual-child level. This is a goal aligned with the aims of the *école-unique*, the one-school-for-all model.

The reforms of 1963 also upheld the principles of the *école unique* by eliminating student tracking in French middle schools. In the 1950s, administrators preserved tracking programs that began at the end of primary school. As a result, the average French child had a

[27] Corbett and Moon, *Education in France*, 45.

high probability of no academic education past eleven years of age.[28] In 1963, administrators moved ability examinations from the end of primary to the middle of secondary school, instituting compulsory academic education for *all students* between the ages of five and fifteen.[29] With this shift, elementary and middle schools served every child in the same way, providing a purely academic education before tracking began at age sixteen. The 1963 reforms thus worked to create a more unified school system, one that provided every child with a more or less identical school experience up until his last two years.

Two brief examples may not constitute a policy trend; however, I argue that they demonstrate a commitment to the principles of the *école-unique* that did not exist in French education policy before 1946. The *Plan L-W* and the reforms of 1963 both demonstrate an expanded conception of formal equality, one that valued individual student experiences and gained momentum during the second half of the twentieth century. Sociologist Katherine Anderson-Levitt confirms that prior to World War II, there existed a dual-education system: primary programs for the masses, secondary programs for the elite. After World War II, new policies demonstrated a commitment to the one-school-for-all model.[30] This model served as a guiding principle for French education policies and furthemore paved the way for programs promoting *égalité des chances*, equal opportunity for academic success.

Moving Towards *Égalité des Chances*

At first glance, it is unclear how policies promoting the *école unique* paved the way for those promoting *égalité des chances (equal opportunity)*. *Égalité des chances* is the idea that every student, regardless of economic background, should have an equal opportunity for

[28] Anderson-Levitt et al., "Elementary Education," 86.
[29] Ibid., 81.
[30] Ibid., 80.

academic success. Let us first briefly consider how policies in support of one-school-for-all and equal opportunity are similar. In striving to produce one school for all, legislators prioritized formal equality among students for a democratic purpose. Policies for equal opportunity also prioritized students and promoted democratic aims. It is thus possible that the ideological foundations of the *école unique* did set the groundwork for policies that support equal opportunity. Still, the policies promoting the *école-unique* and those promoting *égalité des chances* produce opposing school models. The *école unique* aimed to create a school system that would serve all students in an identical – or at the very least similar – manner. Providing more years of academic and general education to all students would ideally eliminate barriers between groups, reduce elitism, and democratize the school system. Policies promoting *égalité des chances* did exactly the opposite by supporting a *fair* rather than equal distribution of educational resources. Policies for *égalité des chances* recognized that low-income or disadvantaged students needed more resources to succeed at the same rate as their more affluent or privileged peers. Thus, by encouraging equal opportunity, policymakers promoted dissimilar schooling among different subgroups of the population. The shift from policies promoting identical education to those providing specialized education for disadvantaged groups suggests a dramatic shift in the perceived purpose of public education. Policies promoting formal equality and the *école unique* aimed to create similar school experiences across all students. Policies promoting *égalité des chances* instead aimed to produce similar academic outcomes. A heightened emphasis on the possibility of academic success across all students demonstrated a new aim of public education: that the school system would protect the interests of every student and encourage equitable academic outcomes across class lines. Thus, the question remains. How did policies for the *école unique* pave the way for this new policy outcome?

Policies promoting the *école unique* paved the way for policies promoting *égalité des chances* because once elementary *and* middle schools provided academic education, teachers, administrators, and bureaucrats noticed uneven school outcomes across class lines. These uneven outcomes helped reveal the inherent academic disadvantage that many twentieth-century, low-income children had to face. It is not a given that policymakers would respond to a notable student-outcome imbalance with an attempt to improve the academic outcomes of low-income children. Policymaking is complex, and a desire to aid disadvantaged youth in schools is likely the result of multiple social, political, economic, and moral factors. These factors are ultimately beyond the scope of this paper, as I am tracking *trends* in public education over the course of the twentieth-century, not the factors that led to them. For the purposes of this subsection, I focus on the imbalanced academic outcomes revealed as a result of 1963 school reforms. The pre-1963 school system used standardized ability tests to select those who would continue on an academic path at the end of primary school. As for those who did not make the cut, their scores did not much matter after moving to a management or vocational track unconcerned with academic aptitude. In the post-1963 school system, *all* students were to continue an academic education, and thus, all students had to demonstrate sufficient academic proficiency in order to advance past primary school. Since the 1963 reforms eliminated standardized placement tests at the completion of primary grades, **teachers became responsible** for identifying fifth-grade students unequipped or unprepared to move to a secondary program. After the teacher identified such students, a committee led by the departmental inspector would decide each child's fate. The options were twofold: either send the child onto secondary school or have the child repeat the fifth grade. Furthermore, students demonstrating insufficient

academic skills in the fifth grade had often already repeated an earlier year of primary school.[31] Having a child repeat a failed year of school, rather than allowing him to continue with his same-age peers, is a practice known as **grade retention**.[32] Grade retention was a very popular strategy among 1960s French teachers, but it was also correlated with poor academic outcomes among low-income students. Consider that in the 1970s, ninety-three percent of French students who repeated first grade were **unable to qualify** for the academic high school track. Consider further that eighty-four percent of the children of professionals and executives finished elementary school at an appropriate age, while only thirty-three percent of working-class children did the same.[33] The former statistic indicates that grade retention may be a factor in poor academic outcomes. The latter confirms that grade retention occurred more frequently among working-class children. In combination, these two statistics suggest that 1960s low-income children were more likely to have worse school outcomes than their more privileged peers. Speaking only to grade retention practices, these worse outcomes perhaps resulted from an emphasis on literacy skills that sometimes put **low-income children** at a disadvantage. The reasons that low-income children tend to have fewer literacy skills are beyond the scope of this paper. It is only important to understand that French first-grade teachers, in particular, did not want to pass students who had not yet learned to read. In fifth grade, retention was predicated upon a similar concern. Evaluation criteria most frequently relied on a student's reading and grammar skills to determine eligibility for secondary-school programs.[34] When it came to grade retention, a perhaps biased

[31] Anderson-Levitt et al., "Elementary Education," 81.
[32] Natalie Hoff, Reece L. Peterson, and Jenna Strawhun, "Grade Retention and Demotion: A Traditional Discipline Consequence," *Student Engagement* (September, 2014): 1.
[33] Anderson-Levitt et al., "Elementary Education," 81.
[34] Ibid.

emphasis on the mastery of standard French made it more difficult for low-income students to attain higher levels of education.

1963 educational reforms promoting the *école unique* revealed an achievement gap between children from high- and low-income families. This is the gap that policies promoting *égalité des chances* intended to close. Although designed to eliminate barriers between groups, reduce elitism, and democratize the school system, 1963 educational reforms instead resulted in an unregulated and ultimately detrimental version of student tracking. Those with greater academic aptitude, as determined by their teachers, completed elementary school on-schedule. Those perceived as less capable or competent had to repeat one or more grades, which was in turn a factor leading to worse academic outcomes. Thus, a policy meant to promote the *école unique*, or similar education for all students, instead promoted more differentiation, often on the basis of a student's class status. This is because teachers relied on grade retention more frequently among low-income students, rather than among their more privileged peers. Even without considering the effects of grade retention, 1963 school reforms forced teachers and departmental inspectors to examine the academic progress of each child more carefully. Policies promoting the *école unique* thus helped to reveal an achievement gap between society's upper- and lower-class children. Policies for *égalité des chances*, or those promoting equal opportunity for academic success, worked to close this gap. As a result, I conclude that policies promoting the *école unique* paved the way for policies promoting *égalités des chances*, even if the former did not directly cause the latter.

Chapter 2

A Brief Digression: Immigration, Housing, and Education, 1946-1965

In this chapter, I digress from my analysis of public education to examine some of the immigration and housing trends that forced French public schools to confront problems well

beyond their purview. In the Post-World War II Era, education policies worked to democratize public schools for the rich and the poor, the native French and ethnic-minorities. A large influx of immigrants complicated but did not preclude this aim. Meanwhile, government housing interventions often limited immigrant equality by encouraging or upholding the segregation and exclusion of immigrants from French public life.

Immigrant Segregation and Housing Interventions: *Bidonvilles* and *Brigades Z*

It was the Post-World War II Era that saw both the rise of democratic education and the segregation of immigrants into slums.[35] As policies in public education supported the *école unique* model and aimed to provide formal equality across all students, the housing market tended to segregate and isolate immigrant families in neighborhoods with poor living conditions. In other words, as public education policies championed democracy and equality among immigrant children, housing trends seemed to do just the opposite among their parents. I recognize that the French government could not control the housing market in the same way it controlled and designed public education. Nonetheless, government officials still had opportunities to intervene and alter immigrant housing patterns, particularly since most immigrants lived in government-subsidized public housing. Government interventions in the housing market did occur between 1946 and 1965; however, these interventions often did little to counteract poor public-housing conditions, nor the development of slums. The interventions did even less to prevent immigrants from living in communities without many local French citizens.

The resultant isolation of immigrant families forced primary and secondary schools to shoulder many of the socio-political complications that segregated housing produced. Between the 1920s and 1960s, a high volume of immigrants came across French borders.[36] Once

[35] Axelle Brodiez-Dolino, review of *En finir avec les bidonvilles. Immigration et politique du logement dans la France des Trente Glorieuses*, by Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaléard, *Le Mouvement Social* 258 (2017): 133, Project MUSE.

[36] Roxanne Lynn Doty, "Racism, Desire, and the Politics of Immigration," *Millennium* 23, no. 3 (1999): 585, SAGE Publications.

immigrants arrived in France, they were often segregated into selected neighborhoods, and the schools had to educate immigrant children in an environment with few, if any, native children. Educational polices between 1946 and 1980 demonstrated a commitment to the *école unique*, or the idea that *one* comprehensive school system should serve the children of *all* schools and communities. Thus, policies promoting the *école-unique*, in combination with a large influx of immigrants, meant that the public education system had to serve sizable cohorts of immigrant students in segregated school environments. In the following paragraphs, I chart how government housing interventions both encouraged and upheld this segregated housing system.

Although the French government did not have direct control over housing, government housing interventions in the 1950s often *encouraged* immigrant segregation. In this paragraph, I discuss one government housing intervention in particular: *bidonvilles* public housing (as it relates to immigrant communities). Between the World Wars and shortly after World War II, an open-door immigration policy (among other factors) encouraged high volumes of immigrants to settle in France. Many ***bidonvilles*** – public-housing complexes at the periphery of large cities – were earmarked for immigrant families, ensuring that these families would have access to housing upon arrival. The French government encouraged immigrant families to live in the suburbs because the location was supposed help them transition into unfamiliar urban environments, while still providing access to city jobs. Allocating suburban public-housing to incoming immigrants also prevented city-housing crises.[37] In light of the prior reasoning, encouraging immigrants to live in *bidonvilles* appears fair and in the best interest of new arrivals and other city residents. Scholar Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaléard, however, has a different perspective. She contends that encouraging immigrants to live in particular public-housing areas

[37] Minayo Nasiali, "Ordering the Disorderly Slum: 'Standardizing' Quality of Life in Marseille Tenements and *Bidonvilles*," *Journal of Urban History* 38, no. 6 (2012): 1026, SAGE Publications.

created an intentional isolation, with migrants **geographically segregated** and expected to assimilate quietly amongst themselves.[38] She further asserts that because France had an open-door immigration policy, officials developed stringent methods of documentation and surveillance, a kind of *de facto* program for immigration control. Although Blanc-Chaléard does not specify *bidonvilles* housing as a mechanism of immigrant surveillance, her argument does support the conclusion that government interventions in immigrant housing often encouraged segregation.[39] As immigrants continued to pour across French borders, immigrant housing became a prominent topic in political discourse. By 1954, in response to rapidly increasing numbers of new arrivals, the French government renamed *bidonvilles* "*cites d'urgence*:" temporary emergency housing complexes both inexpensive and readily available to immigrant families. Turning suburban public-housing into emergency housing served as a stopgap response, a temporary remedy to combat a dearth in available city housing. The unintended consequence of an apparently helpful intervention was a **further relegation** of immigrants to limited housing zones. Furthermore, these housing zones became so overcrowded that they soon turned into slums: shantytowns whose poor living conditions could only become worse as more immigrants arrived.[40] Thus, while the interventions around immigrant housing often seemed to promote the best possible outcomes for immigrant families, they often encouraged immigrant segregation in particular areas, which in turn led to very poor living conditions for new arrivals.

Although the French government did not have direct control over housing, government housing interventions of the early 1960s often *upheld* immigrant segregation. In 1962, Algeria declared independence from France. Algerian refugees poured across French

[38] Brodiez-Dolino, review of *En finir avec les bidonvilles*, 133.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

borders, and officials began to view North African populations as "inassimilable" threats to local government and customs. Earmarking suburban public housing for immigrant families ensured that new arrivals had a place to live; however, it did not provide opportunities for immigrants to assimilate into French life and culture. As a result, the early 1960s saw continual flux in suburban-slum populations, as the government built new public housing complexes spread more evenly across French cities. At first glance, spreading public housing across the city seems to demonstrate a commitment to assimilation and immigrant aid, particularly since the new housing complexes had better living conditions.[41] Unfortunately, some of the strategies intended to promote immigrant assimilation actually reinforced immigrant segregation. First, the French government did not move all immigrants out of *bidonvilles* and into more integrated public-housing. Instead, officials selected particular populations on the basis of which immigrant groups they thought most likely to assimilate. These groups included immigrants of European descent and those from the French colonial empire. Other groups – often those from Sub-Saharan Africa – remained segregated in overcrowded *bidonvilles*.[42] As to how the government got immigrants to leave their communities and homes, one would think this would not be difficult. It seems obvious that people would choose to leave an overcrowded shantytown. Nonetheless, since immigrant families did not always make the decision to leave their homes, the government sometimes resorted to force. If a family or community did not want to move, the government sometimes enlisted *Brigades Z*. A police task force created in 1961, ***Brigades Z*** attempted to frighten and thus force immigrant families to move from one public-housing area to another.[43] Although evidence of the actions of *Brigades Z* is difficult to find and even harder to

[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid., 134.
[43] Ibid., 133.

corroborate, a book by Blanc-Chaléard and an article from TV5 Monde suggest that in rare and extreme cases, the task force went so far as to burn or destroy immigrant homes in order catalyze internal migration.[44, 45] For this reason *Brigades Z* is remembered as one of the greatest symbols of government violence against the people.[46] I bring up *Brigades Z* because at first glance, it seems that 1960s housing interventions worked to provide options for immigrant families and promote assimilationist aims. While this may be true on some level, assimilationist goals were underpinned by practices that continued to isolate immigrants in new, slightly nicer communities and only if the government felt that the population had a good chance at assimilation. Many immigrants remained segregated in suburban public-housing with poor living conditions, and some were subjected to violence in order to force their migration.

Stigmatization: The Unintended Consequence of Immigrant Segregation

Whether intentional or unintentional, the consistent segregation of immigrant communities into *bidonvilles* public-housing created a stigma around 'slum-bound immigrants.' During the period between the First and Second World Wars, nationality of origin became an important marker of difference.[47] In the Post-World War II Era, ethnicity remained an important marker of difference, even though France's Fifth Republic Constitution technically bars any mention of ethnicity in the public sphere.[48] In fact, into the late 1950s, many native Frenchmen considered *bidonville* neighborhoods to be dangerous, unsanitary, and maladapted to modern life. Researcher Minayo Nasiali contextualizes these kinds of ignorant biases in a discussion of the 1950s Peyssonel community, a *banlieue* neighborhood just outside Marseille.

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[44] Ibid., 133.
[45] "L'État français: administration, corruption, et Brigades Z," *TV5 Monde*, May 8, 2012, https://information.tv5monde.com/info/l-etat-francais-administration-corruption-et-brigades-z-3446.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Nasiali, "Ordering the Disorderly Slum," 1026.
[48] Soumahoro. "On the Test," 53.

Newspaper articles from the time period labeled the neighborhood "one of the most foreign in Marseille,…filled with Negro huts, Arab hovels, and Bohemian Caravans."[49] The articles took biases further still, proclaiming the area a center of crime and poverty plagued by "poor blacks, poor Arabs, poor gypsies," and general derelicts.[50] The Municipal Bureau of Hygiene conducted a 1955 study of the people living in Peyssonel. The study found that most heads of household had steady jobs, most families paid rent consistently, and most people were French or Italian in origin.[51] These findings stand in stark contrast to media reports of a crime-infested, morally bankrupt slum swarmed with immigrants of 'Third-World' descent. The Peyssonel case highlights that stigmas surrounding *bidonvilles* often implicated North African, Gypsy, and Muslim immigrants without their actual presence needed. Media outlets assumed a high concentration of Third World immigrants on the basis of Peyssonel's location and low-income bracket, further assuming the community crime-ridden, licentious, and filthy on the basis of the former assumption. In addition to media biases, the municipal study, itself, labeled immigrant nationalities inaccurately, as if to suggest a kind of bureaucratic indifference. 'North African' was a blanket term used to describe families from Algeria, Tunisia, Lebanon, and Senegal, countries that span the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. Nasiali argues that such carelessness exemplifies how nationality categorizations had become racialized, meaning that stigmas surrounding the communities in *bidonville* public-housing actually centered around race.[52]

Racialized stigmas exist in France to this day. Consider the following modern example: the insensitive government and media responses that led to mass youth riots in

[49] Nasiali, "Ordering the Disorderly Slum," 1024.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid., 1025.
[52] Ibid.

2005. In addition to the government blaming Traoré and Benna for their own deaths, nearly every French news source misspelled Traoré and Benna's names and confused the origins of Traoré's family, claiming they were Malian instead of Mauritanian.[53] Like in the Peyssonel municipal study, these kinds of errors suggest public indifference to specific ethnic affiliations, associating the boys more strongly with a foreign, racialized identity, than with a specific nationality. After the riots, racially insensitive, stigmatized commentary continued when politicians blamed the upheaval on polygamy or rap lyrics, rather than legitimate socio-political discontent. To me, this rhetoric feels reminiscent of ignorant and biased claims involving the Negro huts and general derelicts in Peyssonel. Such similarities in language over time suggests the persistence of stigmas crystalized across years of systemic housing segregation in suburban communities with high concentrations of foreigners and minorities.[54]

Immigrant Housing Interventions: Predictive of 2005 Riots and a ZEP-Policy Response

Every incident or condition that incited the 2005 riots spoke to a history of unjust housing practices. The government responded to these conditions with a renovation to public education because from 1946 onward, education promoted democracy and equality across all peoples.[55] From the use of *bidonvilles*, a precursor to *banlieue* public housing, to the violence of *Brigades Z*, a precedent for police brutality, the housing interventions of the early-Post-War Era set the stage for the 2005 riots long before they occurred. Benna and Traoré's African and Muslim backgrounds, police brutality against minority youth, stigmatized government responses, and the racial composition of Clichy-sous-Bois, itself. All these

[53] Soumahoro, "On the Test," 51.
[54] Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'race' and Ethnicity*, 75.
[55] It is important to note that this renovation did include an attempt to improve housing conditions in suburban communities, although this attempt was less publicized and less extensive than the education-based reforms. – Caroline Hendrie, "In the Wake of Riots."

conditions spoke to *banlieue* neighborhood demographics, stigmas surrounding minority communities, and violence against minority youth. In other words, all these conditions spoke to a history of unjust housing practices, not academic inequities. Despite the apparent incongruity between problems associated with housing and solutions found in educational inclusion, 2006 administrators nonetheless made a decision in line with the housing and education trends cemented in the aftermath of World War II. It was the Post-War Era that championed equality among students across socioeconomic lines, while fundamentally refuting it among low-income families of recent immigrant descent. Between 1946 and 1965, the *école unique* served every immigrant children, regardless of his ethnic background or economic status. Housing interventions engaged in the same time period often encouraged or upheld the restriction and exclusion of immigrant populations. In this way, the French government burdened the education system, asking it to **promote and protect democratic aims in a society more diverse and divided than ever before**. Beginning in the 1940s, education programs took on the all the problems and complexities of a segregated housing system. The public education system continues to shoulder these complexities today.

Chapter 3

In Pursuit of *Égalité des Chances*: French Education Policy, 1981 – 1999

Returning to the development of French public education across the twentieth-century, this chapter documents the rise and implementation of education policies promoting égalité des chances. Égalité des chances (equal chance) is the idea that every student should have an equal opportunity academic for success, regardless of his parent's economic status. The rise of these policies in twentieth-century France demonstrates a growing commitment to helping students at an economic disadvantage achieve vertical mobility through academic success.

Égalité des Chances and Social-Mobility Schools – Background from the 1940s

Let's define the term social-mobility school and determine how it relates to *égalités des chances*. Defined as the upward or downward shifts of individuals, families, and groups

from one class position to another, social, or rather vertical, mobility in schools implies the likely upward movement of disadvantaged children due to effective curriculum and other in-school supports. This is relevant to *égalités des chances* because among French legislators, academic success was construed as a strong predictor of economic success. If low-income children had an equal chance at academic achievement, then *any* child, regardless of economic background, could achieve economic stability and middle-or-upper class status on the basis of academic merit. For low-income children, this would allow for vertical mobility.

Now, let's briefly discuss when 'social-mobility' first developed into a school aim in the United States and in France. This chapter mainly focuses on policies promoting *égalité des chances* enacted between 1981 and 1999. To understand where these policies came from, however, I want to take a moment to explore the history of social-mobility schools in France and the United States. I begin this subsection with United States' schools because the social-mobility-school reforms enacted in France were often modelled on or influenced by those of the United States. As far as I know, the idea of social-mobility schools first appeared in the Western education policy arena in the 1940's United States. In fact, Sociologists W. Lloyd Warner, Robert J. Havinghurst, and Marvin B. Loeb wrote a 1944 book entitled *Who Shall Be Educated?*, in which the three authors described the public school as an "elevator in a hardening social structure." More literally, the mid-1940s U.S. school system had become a primary milieu for social mobility, whereas in the nineteenth century, the family and the church had a more exclusive influence in this role.[56] Warner et al. listed five theoretical responsibilities for schools in an era of social mobility. Responsibilities included teaching tolerance to children across socioeconomic lines, helping individuals to realize new societal ideals, and selecting and training

[56] Clara Bell Baker, "Books for Teachers," review of *Who Shall be Educated?* By W. Lloyd Warner, Robert J. Havinghurst, and Marvin B. Loeb, *Childhood Education* 21, no. 1 (1944): 231, ProQuest.

children for social mobility.[57] The idea of 'selecting children for social mobility' suggests a system predicated on student ability tracking; however, this is unsurprising for the 1940s. In French education, too, the idea that schools could and should promote social mobility first arose in the mid-1940s under the ***Plan Langevin-Wallon*.** In practice, the *Plan L-W* opened an upper-secondary program to all students and made strides towards the *école unique*, or formal equality across all students. The plan, however, also established broader pedagogical aims that set the stage for democratized schooling in Post-War France. More specifically, the plan established three principles that aligned with the ideals of social-mobility schools. First, it labeled the public school an organization for justice and emancipation, requiring that all primary and secondary programs meet the academic needs of all students. Second, it insisted upon continual elevation of French culture and civic pride in the collective consciousness of the student body.[58] Third, and often overlooked, it encouraged schools to foster a sense of global responsibility through the incorporation of everyday realities into school curriculum and culture.[59] By highlighting justice and emancipation, academic needs, all students, and everyday realities, the plan's ideological motifs encased the basic values championed by a social-mobility school model. This is because social-mobility schools emphasize the right of every child to receive an equal and just education in the hopes that he or she can use this education to succeed academically and in a broader social context. It is important to note that the principles espoused in the *Plan L-W* are similar to the theoretical responsibilities established by Warner et al. just two years prior. This similarity suggests a commitment to social-mobility schools that transcended national borders. As to how and why these ideas began to spread in the 1940s, it may have had something to do with the

[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Isambert-Jamati, "Les Choix Éducatifs," 76.

nature of the Post-World War II Era. The specific reasons for such a dissemination and sharing of ideas, however, go beyond the scope of my paper.

The *Plan L-W* promoted social-mobility schools in the abstract but did not attempt to enforce new educational principles. More effective enforcement did not occur until the late-1970s and early-1980s. Under the *Plan L-W*, there was a gap between the desire to produce social-mobility schools and the actual enacted reforms. This is perhaps one reason that local administrators often used the plan to demand additional funds for a variety of expenses, rather than guide the provision of just and emancipatory education programs.[60] Thus, the *Plan Langevin-Wallon* set noble ideological aims for education but did not provide the immediate infrastructure changes necessary to achieve them. Unfortunately, the necessary infrastructure changes needed to create social mobility through schools did not arise in French policy until the late 1970s. During this decade, the idea for Priority Education Zones (ZEPs), a program promoting *égalité des chances* for the purpose of vertical mobility, began to garner support among **French teacher unions**.[61] President Mitterand and the Socialist party grandfathered the idea for ZEPs into their political platform. In fact, Mitterand's 1980 campaign rhetoric expressed the future president's desire to provide *égalité des chances* (equal chance) for economically-disadvantaged students. In his opinion, the policies of prior conservative regimes favored the privileged classes to the intentional detriment of working-class students. It was these students who most often faced academic failure and thus matriculated to tracking programs that barred access to higher education.[62] Mitterand's statements suggest that he hoped to provide more academic opportunities to low-income students so that they might succeed at the same rate as

[60] Roche, "1947, le plan Langevin-Wallon."
[61] Bénabou et al., "The French zones d'éducation prioritaire," 345.
[62] John S. Ambler, "Constraints on policy innovation in education: Thatcher's Britian and Mitterand's France" in *Education in France*, ed. Anne Corbett and Bob Moon (New York: Routledge, 1996), 96.

their more privileged peers. This promotion of *égalité des chances* fulfilled the idealistic aims of earlier French education policies and encouraged the idea that social mobility could start in French primary and secondary schools.

A Brief Digression: Social-Mobility Schools as an Old Idea in Western Thought

Although the concept of social-mobility schools did not appear in policy until the mid-twentieth century, it is nonetheless a very old idea in Western thought. I want to provide some context on the educational framework that grounds social-mobility schools in order to illustrate that Post-World War II school philosophies were not as new, nor as revolutionary, as they may seem. I could have selected many different works, as the ideals behind social-mobility schools are quite widespread in Western education scholarship. I chose to examine the works of Plato, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Dewey partially because of their name recognition for those outside the field of public education. More than that, I selected these scholars because they published texts in three separate countries across three different centuries that nonetheless encourage schools to serve all children as a collective body, as individuals, and as equals who can rise through education.

In order for schools to promote social mobility, they must commit to providing an effective education for every child. In Plato's case, effective meant useful to the republic, or rather the state. The first Western scholar known to discuss compulsory education in writing, Plato insisted that education should begin in youth and continue throughout one's life.[63] He argued for early onset because to his mind, if an education system functioned well then so, too, would every other matter of state. In this way, education (and not policy) served as the true foundation of government because when education was in order, the collective could "correct

[63] Plato, *The Republic*, (Instituto de Desenvolvimento do Potencial Humano, 2002), 10, http://www.idph.net/conteudos/ebooks/republic.pdf.

deficiencies and supply the power of self-government" without outside intervention.[64] Thus, Plato argued that education was crucial for socialization and for the maintenance of society. I further contend that Plato's argument grounds the concept of social-mobility schools. In order for a school system to function as a "social elevator" for all children, it must serve every child. In order for legislators to promote schools for social mobility, they must first believe that schools maintain society and promote desired societal aims.

According to Rousseau, public schools could serve as a tool for social mobility, or even a tool for transgression of the current societal milieu. An outsider throughout his life, Rousseau's writings tended to emanate an intense social marginality, relying on personal experience, as much as broader social, historical, and political considerations.[65] This peculiar voice came through strongly in *Emile*, Rousseau's controversial commentary on the individual child's sufferings under the dominating auspices of the French school system. Arguing that such a system threatened "the whole welfare of humanity," Rousseau asserted that no man should be educated only for his societal station. Since life was unpredictable, and the future was unknowable, the station of one's parents was not necessarily predictive of future life prospects.[66, 67] In a society that allows for social mobility, in a globalized world in which people move, laws change, and fortune comes and goes, future scholars had to be nurtured: they had to understand how to live in any context, how to revel in and profit from life.[68] Rousseau's hopeful view invited each child to **rise through education** and asked that the system educate each individual

[64] Ibid., 47.
[65] Bronislaw Baczko and Steven Raichlen, "Rousseau and Social Marginality," *Daedalus* 107, no. 3 (Summer 1978): 27, JSTOR.
[66] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile*, trans. Barbara Foxley (New York: E.P. Duton and Co., 1911), 10, http://lf-oll.s3.amazonaws.com/titles/2256/Rousseau_1499_Bk.pdf.
[67] Ibid., 2.
[68] Ibid., 10.

so that they could lead any sort of life. Such an argument, in its expansive view of the role and power of education, grounds the ideas behind social-mobility schools.

John Dewey, in his 1919 book *Democracy and Education* further supported the principles of social-mobility schools because education that transcended class boundaries also created a more stable democratic state. Dewey, like the two prior scholars, understood education as a necessary social function, one that in 1919 still varied in quality based on the social and economic position of a group. In a democracy, or society that encouraged improvement through change, educational models and practices needed to differ from those of other school systems. This is because democracies had to produce more equitable school outcomes in order to act in line with pronounced societal principles.[69] A society with strict and immovable class distinctions educated for the purpose of class restriction and isolation. Democratic societies rather encouraged contact between social classes and inspired collective goals across class lines. Ideal democratic societies educated students as future citizens and voters. Thus, Dewey championed the connection between the citizen and the republic, the child and the school system. According to Dewey, democracies placed higher stakes on effective universal education and national community cohesion.[70] With these ideas in mind, one can see how Dewey's argument grounds the ideas behind social mobility schools. Since democratic societies required that all students receive a good education in order to participate in the democratic system, schools must help students feel both connected to their national identities and welcome to participate in democratic institutions. If social-mobility schools were to truly work, they would result in all members of society feeling more equal after having experienced equal

[69] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, (Project Gutenberg, 2008), chap. 7, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/852/852-h/852-h.htm.
[70] Ibid.

levels of academic success, or at the very least, equal opportunity for academic success as a result of a fairer division of resources.

Back to 1980s France: The *Zone d'Éducation Prioritaire* Program

Before delving into the design and implementation of ZEPs, I want to briefly explore why a program for *égalité des chances* became a priority in 1980s France. It is first important to note that the ZEP program was not necessarily French in nature or conception. In fact, France was not first among Western nations to enact a priority education program in the Post-War Era. Instead, the idea took root in United States education in the mid-1960s, then in Great Britain in the early 1970s. Title I in the United States provided federal aid to schools with large numbers of low-income students; Great Britain's "Education Priority Areas" literally gave the French ZEP policy its name. [71, 72] Both U.S. and British programs reprioritized the education of their most impoverished students by spending more on schools in neighborhoods with the lowest income brackets. As to the purpose this reprioritization served, the United States understood added funding as a means to "help ensure that all children [met] challenging state academic standards."[73] Emphasis on the academic success of 'all children' is the idea of *égalité des chances*, or the idea that every student should have an equal opportunity to succeed in public schools. The similarities between Title X, Education Priority Areas, and the French ZEP suggest that in the 1981, France followed the lead of two similar nations, rather than innovating on its own. In fact, local teacher unions – which were the first group to support ZEPs in France – took their ideas directly from the British Education-Priority-Area policy.[74] Socialist presidential

[71] "Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Education Agencies (Title I, Part A)," U.S. Department of Education, Google, last modified October 5, 2015, https://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html.
[72] Bénabou et al., "The French zones d'éducation prioritaire," 345.
[73] "Improving Basic Programs," U.S. Department of Education.
[74] Bénabou et al., "The French zones d'éducation prioritaire," 345.

candidate François Mitterand grandfathered the idea for ZEPs into his campaign platform and enacted the policy within his first year in office. Thus, it seems that the 1980s became the era of *égalité des chances* policies due to a combination of factors. Determining them all would require extensive social and policy research, but briefly, it seems that some of the biggest factors were educational trends in the U.S. and Great Britian, Mitterand and the Socialist Party, the desires and concerns of French teachers, and the growing conception of public schools as a promoter and protector of society's democratic and egalitarian aims.

Now, let's discuss what the ZEP did and how it worked. In terms of how the program operated, the 1981 ZEP designated certain geographical regions as priority zones and thereby drew administrators' attention to the schools and students facing the gravest economic disadvantages.[75] Administrators supposedly selected priority zones on the basis of a community's average income bracket, prioritizing neighborhoods with the lowest average incomes and therefore greatest economic disadvantages. A first attempt at positive discrimination on the basis of economic status, ZEPs attempted to improve school outcomes for impoverished children by spending more on those with less. More commonly referred to as affirmative action, positive discrimination entails the implementation of positive measures that benefit disadvantaged people or groups.[76] In the case of ZEPs, positive discrimination provided more economic resources to benefit low-income children in schools, or rather to improve their academic outcomes. The ZEP program began as **temporary** because the Ministry of Education hoped resource increases would catalyze community partnerships, teaching strategies, and enrichment programs that could continue once the ZEP designation had expired. At first a **rather**

[75] Caroline Hendrie, "In the Wake of Riots."

[76] "Positive Discrimination," European Institute for Gender Equality, Google, last modified June 17, 2002, http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/thesaurus/terms/1320.

vague classification, a priority zone designation did not at first specify any desired in-school changes.[77] Schools in ZEP-designated regions were instead asked to determine what kinds of supports This is in part because the national Ministry of Education wanted to provide aid on the basis of what local teachers, administrators, and parents deemed most important to their particular schools. In this way, ZEPs promoted a diffusion of responsibility to those who best understood what local children would need to succeed, providing schools with greater funding so that they could catalyze changes and greater autonomy so that they could see them through.[78, 79, 80]

Let's examine the reforms that individual ZEP schools implemented most frequently. Since the program had **no universal criteria**, one can only uncover a clear set of goals by examining initial program evaluations. French sociologist Vivienne Isambert-Jamati did just that in a 1990 journal article, in which she combed 1980s ZEP school reports and divided enacted reforms into three respective categories. The categories included improvements to teaching and curriculum, improvements to in-school communities, and improvements to relationships between schools and local families, or the community at-large.[81] The teaching and curricular category housed some of the most concrete national reforms, while the community relationships category was considered the most important but least engaged of the three. Most schools implemented at least some changes across all three categories. In terms of **teaching and curricular improvements**, the national government allocated specific resources to pay for more teachers or teaching aides and to raise teacher salaries in hopes of attracting higher-caliber staff.

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[77] Bénabou et al., "The French zones d'éducation prioritaire," 345.
[78] Wayne Dumas and William B. Lee, "Joan of What? The History Crisis in French Schools," *The History Teacher* 18, no. 4 (August 1985): 551.
[79] Bénabou et al., "The French zones d'éducation prioritaire," 345.
[80] Isambert-Jamati, "Les Choix Éducatifs," 78.
[81] Ibid., 81.

The government also paid overtime so that educators could work additional hours with students in need of extra help.[82] These types of changes ensured that children understood course material as the year progressed, rather than forcing students to repeat a school year had they not mastered the material by the end.[83] Other reforms under this category tended to place a strong emphasis on language, reading, and dual language instruction. Some schools even provided individualized academic aid, tutoring sections, or programs like GAPP (*groupe d'aide psycho-pédagogique*), an in-school therapy group for children from troubled homes.[84] In terms of **in-school community improvements**, tactics included a range of practices generally aimed at community-building and beautification. Schools often reported creating more club options, art workshops, or social events, adding decoration to facilities, improving cafeteria food, and forming a student advisory board.[85] The most important and most radical category – **school-community relationships** – held high status for two main reasons. First, policymakers believed that students socially engaged with their school communities and curricula would feel motivated to complete assignments. Second, through the intermediation of community programs, parents would hopefully feel implicated in their children's education and understand it as an important aspect of French socialization.[86] Despite its importance, changes in this category were nonetheless rare; they included the creation of cultural and community centers, libraries, and neighborhood bulletins. Some efforts were as simple as walks through the surrounding environment or school participation in community holidays and festivals.[87] Never explicitly stated, these types of reforms had an underlying implication: that the ZEP program hoped to aid children of diverse

[82] Ibid., 76.
[83] Anderson-Levitt et al., "Elementary Education," 81.
[84] Isambert-Jamati, "Les Choix Éducatifs," 82.
[85] Ibid., 86.
[86] Ibid., 77.
[87] Ibid., 89.

cultural and ethnic backgrounds, as much as it supported those from low-income homes. Isambert-Jamati reinforces this point, highlighting the government's desire to engage local cultural and academic resources as part of a localized curriculum and daily in-school experience.[88]

The ZEP's push for locally-determined student and community programs was not universally well-received. With an explicit emphasis on students of low-economic status, the ZEP championed student achievement in a way no policy had done before. Enacted in pursuit of *égalité des chances*, ZEPs placed emphasis on equalizing student outcomes across class lines. This proved controversial in that a commitment to equal opportunities for academic success entailed increasing local autonomy to aid low-income students. This was controversial because it decentralized French school control from all national to slightly more local levels and because it allowed school curriculum and programs to vary between communities. French education is historically famous for its insistence upon centrally controlled schools. During certain eras, the national government has gone so far as to standardize details from desired student outcomes to hours spent per day on math or language instruction.[89] In fact, the French have often viewed nationally mandated curriculum in primary and secondary schools crucial to the success of French students, who all take identical ability tests and high school exit exams. Journalist Maurice T. Maschino, philosopher Jean-Claude Milner, and education scholar Marie-Claude Bartholy were some of the most vocal 1980s critics, publishing and distributing pamphlets, even books, that warned against a curriculum set and designed by individual schools. In these writings, Maschino, Milner, and Bartholy, maintained a more conservative view of French education, conservative referring to the traditional practice of setting national curriculum and

[88] Ibid., 75-76.
[89] Dumas and Lee, "The History Crisis," 551.

academic programs for all. The conservative camp supported a return to more stringent methods of teaching, as subscribers believed students should passively receive information presented in formal ways.[90] Under this philosophy, state-mandated education served a single purpose: to transfer the knowledge and morals of one generation to the next. Sociologist Isambert-Jamati labels this view of education antiquated, rooted in nostalgia for a French *lycée*, or upper secondary school, that no longer existed.[91]

Overall, the ZEP policy promoted schools for social mobility in a way that emphasized the importance of effective education in low-income communities for the sake of *égalité des chances*. In 1981, ZEP programs catered to several rights of French students that the Ministry of Education had long-respected. These included the right of each child to education and training, the goal to educate towards responsible citizenship, and the goal to promote a capacity for adaption, creativity, and effective contribution to French society.[92] According to the Ministry of Education, the ZEP was successful in that it gave students from disadvantaged areas additional resources and attention from age two onward. It further required that schools neglect no student, even if that student was unlikely to take the *baccalauréat* and would instead move to a vocational pathway. The program failed in that it did not do enough to promote universal change across all disadvantaged regions, resulting in lingering achievement gaps that policymakers hoped to continue shrinking in the future. The analysis presented in the Education Framework Act led to the first ZEP renewal, a renovation in 1990 meant to improve education amongst all disadvantaged communities and groups.[93, 94] I will return to this renewal later in this

[90] Isambert-Jamati, "Les Choix Éducatifs," 78.
[91] Ibid., 79.
[92] Ibid., 49.
[93] Ibid., 52-53.
[94] Bénabou et al., "The French zones d'éducation prioritaire," 345.

chapter. For now, I want to discuss the 1980s policy trend that promoted *égalité des chanc*es in education.

Other 1980s French Policies Promoting *Égalité des Chances*

Although ZEPs are perhaps the most famous example of a policy for the purpose of social mobility, President Mitterand's 1980s administration made further efforts to promote *égalité des chances* across French schools. Consider the **eradication of *Activités d'Eveil*** as an example of a policy decision made for the purpose of promoting equal opportunity for success. Designed under a Montessori model for teaching history, geography, and social studies, *Activités d'Eveil* curriculum gave teachers and students the freedom to explore topics as they chose, take field trips, and expand perspectives through individual enrichment. From the late 1970s through early 1980s, politicians and educators of many political affiliations worried about the quality of history education.[95] Conservative political groups were the first to complain, concerned that the more freeform curriculum would lack important cultural and nationalistic undertones. By the late 1970s, however, multiple interested parties had voiced concerns. President of the Association of Professors of History and Geography Jean Peyrot even claimed that 1970s students were "historically illiterate" and possessed completely different historical referents as compared to their over-forty peers. In 1983, President Mitterand responded to multitudinous concerns with a promise to reform the teaching of history and philosophy so as to avoid further "loss of collective memory in the young generation."[96] Acting on this promise, Minister of Education Alain Savary asked a history professor at a prominent Parisian university to lead a study on the effectiveness, or rather ineffectiveness, of the *Activités d'Eveil* program. Both the professor and Savary were dismayed by the results of the study, which concluded that

[95] Dumas and Lee, "The History Crisis," 543.
[96] Ibid.

the policy had produced a significant dearth in children's history knowledge upon entering *collège*, the French equivalent for middle school.[97] Even more disappointing, the study revealed that sixty-nine percent of teachers did not take trips to nearby historical sites, while twenty-three percent of elementary school educators did not bother teaching history at all. The program's vague directives had left instructors unequipped to create strategies for student success in history programs.[98] A problem typical of France's highly centralized system, the Ministry of Education set guidelines for teachers, while departmental inspectors, tasked with policy enforcement, often left educators to interpret curriculum as they chose.[99] In this way, the government did not bother to ensure that teachers understood how to effectively implement new pedagogies.[100] Standardized curriculum, let alone overarching pedagogical goals, thus created a paradoxical autonomy among teachers, "for reforms imposed from the top [were] reinterpreted, if not subverted, as they [moved] through the channels from Paris to the classroom."[101] In the case of *Activités d'Eveil*, since the majority of teachers ignored or simply did not understand policy goals, its influence on pedagogy and instruction proved limited, if not adverse.[102]

In response to the program's apparent failure, the ministry of education switched from a Montessori model to a more structured, chronological program called Back-to-Basics, thereby protecting the needs of disadvantaged students.[103] Under Back-to-Basics, national bureaucrats refashioned history programs in a way that provided highly specific directives for educators to follow. These new directives insisted upon seventy hours of history instruction per year, dividing the hours between time spent on individual projects and time spent

[97] Ibid., 545-546.
[98] Ibid., 546.
[99] Anderson-Levitt et al., "Elementary Education," 84.
[100] Ibid., 89.
[101] Ibid., 90.
[102] Ibid., 77.
[103] Dumas and Lee, "The History Crisis," 543.

on more traditional-style lectures and recitations. Chronology of events was a specific priority, particularly at the middle-school level, and policymakers created seven chronological units that included a list of key concepts, vocabulary, dates, events, and persons to know or memorize.[104] As to why this dearth in historical knowledge was such a concern, the answer is multifaceted. On an obvious level, a large dearth in any body of student knowledge is unfavorable. Still, policymakers' deeper arguments for such specific reforms stemmed from a desire to protect the educational opportunities of low-income students. In the early years of his presidency, Mitterand was the first socialist leader to preside over a socialist-controlled parliament.[105] With Back-to-Basics, however, his ministry of education relied on paradoxically conservative reforms. 'Conservative' here refers to the traditional practice of setting strict curriculum and academic programs for all, as well as the idea that students should receive information presented in formal lecture and not through more creative, individualized pathways.[106, 107] Such a conservative pedagogical model engaged an opposite strategy to that engaged by ZEPs, as the latter program decentralized curriculum so that teachers could innovate on the basis of their communities' needs. In the case of *Activités d'Eveil*, the freeform nature of the program model most impacted students from disadvantaged homes, since – even as history curriculum became more fluid – state tests had not changed, and in France, passing tests is key to a successful academic future. Children from upper-class backgrounds received the French cultural and historical information they needed at home, but those from working-class or immigrant backgrounds relied predominantly on schools as their vehicle for future advancement.[108] The fact that both

[104] Ibid., 547-548.
[105] Caroline Hendrie, "In the Wake of Riots."
[106] Isambert-Jamati, "Les Choix Éducatifs," 78.
[107] Dumas and Lee, "The History Crisis," 546.
[108] Ibid., 551.

conservative and progressive ideologies underlie 1986 Back-To-Basics and 1981 ZEP reforms suggests an overarching commitment to student equity, or rather schools for social mobility, that transcended partisan preferences. Furthermore, the idea that working-class children needed schools for future advancement feels at least tangentially tied to 2006 education ministry official Pierre Polivka's assertion: "the republic and the school are linked in France."[109] This is true particularly among students of low socioeconomic status, for if the schools do not serve them equitably, they cannot go on to serve French society in their future careers and lives.

While ZEP and Back-To-Basics programs prioritized the education of socioeconomically-disadvantaged students, other 1980s reforms sought to promote parity among individual students in a broader sense. A condition foundational to the French one-school-for-all model, education funding is fully centralized at the national level. To understand this concept, consider that in 2015, France spent twenty-one percent of its national budget on education, as compared to 2.6 percent spent at the United States federal level.[110, 111] The French government even subsidizes private education, in which over ninety-five percent of students receive Catholic schooling.[112] Such schooling runs directly counter to the French mandate for *Laïcité*, or the strict separation of church and state.[113] Every government observing the 1951 "contract of association," however, has placed a higher value on centralization of school funding than on upholding secular principles.[114] Minister of Education Alain Savary hoped to reduce this

[109] Hendrie, "In the Wake of Riots."
[110] Jessica Magaziner, "Education in France," World Education News + Reviews, Google, last modified September 8, 2015, https://wenr.wes.org/2015/09/education-france.
[111] "Federal Spending: Where does the money go?," National Priorities Project, Google, accessed March 10, 2018, https://www.nationalpriorities.org/budget-basics/federal-budget-101/spending/.
[112] John S. Ambler, "Why French Education Policy is So Often Made on the Streets," French Politics and Society 12, no. 2/3 (Spring/Summer 1994): 45.
[113] "Qu'est-ce Que La Laïcité," Observatoire de la Laïcité, Google, accessed March 12, 2018, http://www.gouvernement.fr/qu-est-ce-que-la-laicite.
[114] Richard Teese, "Private Schools in France: Evolution of a System," *Comparative Education Review* 30, no. 2 (May, 1986): 249, JSTOR.

ideological contradiction by closing administrative and curricular gaps without infringing upon religious autonomy. His plan, entitled the Savary Bill, angered secularist school supporters, so they requested the assistance of the National Assembly. Unfortunately, proposed amendments were then unacceptable to the Catholic education camp. A full-day protest ensued, as one million private school supporters marched the 1984 Parisian summer streets. The Savary Bill had failed. He and Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy resigned in disgrace, their efforts for greater unity and equality across French schools ultimately unsuccessful in this case.[115]

ZEPs and *Égalité des Chances* in 1990s and the Twenty-First Century

With the creation and implementation of 1981 ZEPs, the French government produced a more effective model for *égalité des chances*. Still, three subsequent renovations – in 1990, 1997, and 2006 – reveal that France is still working to promote education that gives all children the opportunity to succeed. The **1990 ZEP restoration** clarified the role of ZEPs as a program to raise success rates on standardized tests, particularly among disadvantaged students. **1997 reforms** focused on ZEP efficiency, pushing for greater teacher stability; activities centered on the basics: speaking, reading, and writing; and increased school willingness to work within the neighborhood community and ZEP model. **2006 renovations** diversified the program through the addition of *Réseaux d'Education Prioritaire*, or rather a new designation to identify communities with the greatest demonstrated need.[116] With each ensuing revival of priority education, the national government attempted to perfect the schools for social mobility model, adapting ZEPs to accommodate new student needs or newly identified obstacles.

[115] Ambler, "Why French Education Policy is Made on the Streets," 45.

[116] *Canopé*, "Éducation Prioritaire: Repères Historiques," Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, Google, accessed on April 8, 2018, https://www.reseau-canope.fr/education-prioritaire/comprendre/reperes-historiques.html.

Moving beyond 2006 policy goals, *égalité des chances* programs first enacted in the 1980s have greatly impacted French school outcomes and policy decisions today. In a 2014 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report, forty percent of French people aged twenty-five to thirty-four had achieved a higher level of education than their parents. This exceeds the average increase in educational achievement amongst all participating OECD nations.[117] France also increased investment in primary, secondary, and higher education institutions between 2005 and 2011, spending fifteen percent more per capita at the university level and three percent more per capita at the primary and secondary levels.[118] Although the connection is correlational and not causal, these increases perhaps signify a sustained commitment to improved public education following the social disturbances of 2005, particularly at the higher-education level. Further speaking to this commitment, it is interesting to note that the 2016 OECD report on education mentions that in 2013, France spent a higher proportion of its Gross National Product on public education than the OECD average.[119] A study by Oxford University Economists Max Roser and Esteban Ortiz-Ospina expanded these results, explaining that between 1870 and 1993, percentages of GNP's spent on public education have increased from zero to above nine percent in nations like Norway, France, and the United Kingdom, among others.[120] In France, in particular, policymakers spent approximately 5.4 percent of the GNP on education in 1993. In 2013, the number remains similar, at around 5.5 percent.[121] Although this expenditure did not much change over the course of ten years, the commitment to equitable

[117] "Education at a Glance 2014: France," OECD, accessed April 7, 2, http://www.oecd.org/education/France-EAG2014-Country-Note.pdf.
[118] Ibid., 9.
[119] Education at a Glance 2016: France," OECD, accessed April 7, 1, https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/EAG2016-France-Eng.pdf.
[120] Max Roser and Esteban Ortiz-Ospina, "Financing Education," Our World in Data, accessed March 13, 2018, https://ourworldindata.org/financing-education#school-inputs.
[121] United Nations Institute for Statistics, "Government Expenditure on Education, total (% of GDP)," The World Bank, accessed April 8, 2018, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS?locations=FR.

public education in France is clear, as in 2015, the nation had a ninety-nine percent literacy rate.[122] Furthermore, unlike the teachers of the *Activité d'Eveil* program, who were often primary school instructors with little to no university education on history instruction, today's teachers need a master's degree to even consider entering the classroom.[123] In 2013, the French Ministry of Education created *Ecoles Supérieures du Professorat et de l'Education (*ESPEs), or masters programs dedicated specifically to primary and secondary teacher and staff training. The programs combine theoretical work with hands-on experience and require even nursery school educators to receive a master's degree before they can certifiably teach.[124, 125] Out of all OECD nations, France is one of only four who stipulates this requirement in teacher training.[126] Thus, even after 2006, the idea of schools for social mobility – of equitable education across all bounds – has only increased and is a clear goal of the French educational system to this day.

Chapter 4

The Unsuccessful ZEP in Suburban Public Housing

In this chapter, I first establish that the ZEP was unsuccessful in producing improved academic outcomes among low-income students. I then examine how between 1981 and today, the ZEP actually promoted égalité des chances among students at both an economic and racial disadvantage. Legislators merely did not speak to the second category outright because of the controversial nature of discussing race in the public sphere.

The Unsuccessful ZEP

Although the ZEP program set a precedent for future legislation, its initial attempts at positive discrimination were rather unsuccessful. ZEPs have become a staple policy for the

[122] Magaziner,"Education in France."
[123] Dumas and Lee, "The History Crisis," 549.
[124] *Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale*, "Teacher Training Key in Education Reform Implementation," Gouvernement.fr, last modified April 30, 2015, http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid97738/teacher-training-key-in-education-reform-implementation.html&xtmc=master&xtnp=1&xtcr=8.
[125] "Education at a Glance 2014," 5.
[126] Ibid.

promotion of equitable education, but a scathing report by Economists Roland Bénabou, Francis Kramarz, and Corinne Prost labels the 1981 and 1990 programs a waste of government funds and a proliferation of boastful rhetoric. These researchers focused on quantitative effectiveness, first noticing that ZEPs have never been listed on France's national education budget.[127] Economist Denis Maguain cites different findings, explaining that while there has never been an official document stating as such, in practice, the French government has spent an average of 0.7 percent of the annual education budget on ZEPs. This is an undeniably small amount, particularly when one considers that by 2006, ZEPs had expanded to serve one out of every five French students.[128] By the late 1990s, 700,000 primary school and 400,000 middle school students – eleven and fifteen percent of respective populations – attended ZEP-designated schools. To provide a sense of the amount spent on such schools, consider that in 1998, the ZEP program received a total of 400 million euros above baseline school allocations. As for the original program, a quarter of funds paid teacher bonuses, while the rest either paid teacher overtime or provided funds so that schools could hire more personnel to decrease class sizes. There was little emphasis on, nor was there any money dedicated to, non-wage related financial concerns.[129] After studying the program for student cohorts in 1982, 1989, and 1990, the economists found that a ZEP title resulted in no statistically significant improvements to justify expenditures on bonuses, nor overtime for an enlarged teaching staff. Despite a pay increase meant to attract higher-caliber educators, teachers in ZEPs tended to have less experience and hold fewer degrees than the average French teacher.[130] In terms of hours spent in the classroom, increases were slow and modest. Hours of instruction increased by approximately one percent per year for students of the

[127] Bénabou et al., "The French zones d'éducation prioritaire," 345.
[128] Maguain, "Discrimination positive," 186.
[129] Bénabou et al., "The French zones d'éducation prioritaire," 347.
[130] Ibid., 351.

1980s and early 1990s programs. In terms of decreasing class sizes due to additional teaching staff, ZEP-designated schools experienced an average class reduction of 0.2 students per class per year. This translates into 2 students lost over the course of ten years. Furthermore, the number of teachers present in ZEP schools did not increase much more than the number in any traditional school environment. When the number did increase above the average, it was because schools that received a ZEP designation often lost between four and six entering students per year due to a stigmatizing label, one that warned families of a likely low-performing school.[131] A result of ultimately unhelpful modifications, student outcomes did not much change in light of a ZEP title. In fact, when comparing student success rates on the *baccalauréat* before and after a school adopted a ZEP label, the variation is not statistically significant.[132] This perhaps suggests why secondary school students demonstrated throughout France in 1990, nine years after the first iteration of ZEP-status schools. In the protests, students demanded an increase in school funding for better security, facilities, and still smaller class sizes.[133] In light of Bénabou et al.'s findings on ZEP ineffectiveness, these demands are unsurprising.

Quantitative statistics on the failures of the initial ZEP program are problematic on their own. Education scholar Vivienne Isambert-Jamati's qualitative contributions to the research literature do not improve the program's overall impression. Using reports from educational rectories tasked with data collection from each ZEP zone coordinator, Isambert-Jamati examines 1980s primary sources to complete her 1990 program review.[134] The reports highlighted reforms that fell under three categories which corresponded to overarching program goals: actions to improve teaching and curriculum, actions to improve in-school community, and

[131] Ibid., 350-351.
[132] Ibid., 353.
[133] Ambler, "Why French Education Policy is Made on the Streets," 49.
[134] Isambert-Jamati, "Les Choix Éducatifs," 80.

collaborative actions to improve school-community relationships.[135] Of the 350 geographic areas originally declared ZEPs, schools implemented at least some changes across the board, although most favored reforms relating to curriculum and in-school community building. Furthermore, since schools relied on the mobilization of funds from the national government, the limited impact of increased funding explained by Bénabou et al. further restricted the program's overall qualitative effectiveness.[136] Just as with *Activités d'Eveil*, inability to monitor each school's true activities made it difficult to accurately evaluate program success. While schools did provide reports each year and had ZEP coordinators charged with overseeing the district, it was hard to determine exaggerations of truth, as well as which programs already existed and only received more national support under the new policy's guiding hand.[137] In a Parisian district visited by social researchers, administrators of the ZEP program came from outside the community. Detached from local schools, already overworked and overwhelmed, these administrators did not much care about the program's successful implementation. Reviewing school reports was just another affair on their plates. In addition, the ZEP coordinator for this district was a local school leader. Although more closely connected to the region, he still explained that his school would always come first.[138] Thus, the ZEP policy represented new ideals but had little assurance of enforcement, despite the fact that the data in Isambert-Jamati's reports does look promising as to the qualitative success of the early 1990s program.

The original ZEP program had yet more shortcomings. Although meant to provide more to those with less, the original ZEP had no selection criteria to ensure that it benefitted

[135] Ibid., 81.
[136] Ibid., 90.
[137] Ibid., 86.
[138] Ibid., 96.

those who most needed aid.[139] As a result, 1980s schools had the option to opt out of the designation, which the Communist party initially encouraged their mayors to do, since they saw the label as stigmatizing.[140] Furthermore, priority zones were often placed in regions loyal to the party of the president, prime minister, or minister of education. As an example, in the 1981 program, twenty-nine percent of middle schools received a ZEP designation in the Nièvre region. This was a rural region, not necessarily poor and not of high immigrant composition; however, it was one of President Mitterand's electoral strongholds, and through this program he provided the community with additional school funds and special academic status.[141] Nearly twenty years later, Prime Minister Lionel Jospin still complained of the issue, explaining that thirty-nine percent of middle school students in Nièvre went to schools with a ZEP designation, while only twenty-nine percent of students from the poor public housing project Seine-Saint-Denis did the same. This housing project resides within Clichy-sous-Bois, where the 2005 riots began after the deaths of local teenagers Bouna Traoré and Zyed Benna.[142] The subsequent renovations of priority education worked to ensure that such inequities could not persist. Falling in line with this aim, an entire website now exists to promote the history, goals, and strategies behind effective priority education.[143] Thus, despite initial failures, the government now relies heavily on ZEPs to promote equity across all schools and to support the needs of disadvantaged populations. As to why this has occurred, consider the following connections between ZEPs, aid for those with implicitly-intersectional identities, and outbursts among *banlieue* youth that began in 1981 but continue to this day.

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[139] Ibid.
[140] Bénabou et al., "The French zones d'éducation prioritaire," 353.
[141] Ibid., 353-354.
[142] Ibid., 354.
[143] *Canopé*, "Éducation Prioritaire: Accueil," Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, Google, accessed on April 8, 2018, https://www.reseau-canope.fr/education-prioritaire/accueil.html.

A Present and Implicit Emphasis on Race

In order to discuss how ZEPs grant tacit aid on a racial-inequity basis, it must be established that the program's emphasis on race is both present and implicit. Keep in mind that race must remain implicit because France's Fifth Republic Constitution does not recognize the difference between citizens on the basis of gender, race, or religion. An examination of the modern controversy surrounding positive discrimination programs provides an opportunity to see the implicit use of race in the discussion of *banlieues* communities. I focus on examples from the early twenty-first century because they are easier to find than those from the twentieth-century, which often allude to race in even more clandestine ways. It is important to note that although positive discrimination began in ZEPs, it has since proliferated across several policy initiatives in French education and employment fields. To understand how the racial component is **implicit**, first consider the following claim from a 2008 *LeMonde* article: although positive discrimination polices vary greatly, one thing they all have in common is that the 'discrimination' is never based on ethnicity or race. Rather, policymakers focus on less controversial labels, aiding people of low-economic status, those from disadvantaged neighborhoods, or victims of undefined social inequalities.[144] Current President Emmanuel Macron used similarly vague language to discuss the people positive discrimination programs attempt to aid. During his campaign, Macron championed increasing positive discrimination through the modern version of the ZEP program, pumping still greater resources into disadvantaged neighborhoods. He claimed that certain neighborhoods are trapped, the people stuck in their own communities because French society at-large has not allowed them to succeed. In his rhetoric on disadvantaged citizens, Macron, as

[144] "Les Premiers Pas," *LeMonde*, December 17, 2018, http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article_interactif/2008/12/16/les-premiers-pas-de-la-discrimination-positive-en-france_1131879_3224.html.

would be expected, did not overtly recognize the race nor ethnicity in his description of positive discrimination programs. Nevertheless, vague adjectives like 'disadvantaged' and 'trapped' call to mind journalist Angelique Chrisafis's 2015 statement on the youth of Clichy-sous-Bois, youth who are "stuck in dismal suburbs [and] marginalized [or] jobless because of their address, skin color, or…parents' immigrant origins."[145] The similarity of the two statements suggest that Macron and Chrisafis are referencing the same socioeconomically *and* racially disadvantaged community. The former is merely unwilling or unable to express such an idea in an overt manner.

Although vague terminology often suggests an implicit understanding of racial inequities across French society, official reports that have motivated ZEP renewals often highlight predominantly economic disparity in student success rates. The best example of this trend occurred prior to the most recent ZEP restoration in 2014, when an OECD report proclaimed France the number one country in which parental job title was a determining factor in student achievement.[146] Put another way, even in 2013, the achievement gaps first noticed in the 1960s still existed more in France than in any of the other thirty-four OECD nations. As a reference, included nations range from Japan to Mexico, Chile to Belgium, and Australia, among others.[147] The ZEP revival of 2014 was a direct response to a report that revealed exclusively economic inequities, thereby suggesting that positive discrimination programs sometimes do function to rectify only economic and not implicitly racial disparities.

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[145] Chrisafis, "Nothing's Changed."

[146] *Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale*, "La Lutte Contre Les Inégalités Scolaires," Gouvernement.fr, May 15, 2017, http://www.gouvernement.fr/action/la-lutte-contre-les-inegalites-scolaires.

[147] "List of OECD Member Countries – Ratification Convention on the OECD," OECD, accessed April 10, 2018, http://www.oecd.org/about/membersandpartners/list-oecd-member-countries.htm.

To understand that the racial component is nonetheless present, consider the following policy and political-discourse examples. The most outright instance of race and ethnicity present in a program for positive discrimination, the *#LesCompétencesDabord* campaign, raised awareness around unfair racial biases in the hiring of new personnel. The 2016 national campaign explained how companies hiring practices often discriminated against those with non-French names or origins. Of two equally qualified candidates, a person with a non-French name or origin on average had to send out four times as many résumés as a person of French background in order to gain employment.[148] In response to this glaringly unfair hiring practice, the French government created a national awareness campaign that directly addressed discrimination in the workplace on the basis of race and ethnicity. This is somewhat surprising decision, since the Fifth Republic Constitution does not recognize the difference between citizens on the basis of gender, race, or religion. Thus, *#LesCompétencesDabord* provides an excellent example of the fact that the French government can and does recognize ethnic discrimination as a factor that limits equity and opportunity among people of color. Similar to the *#LesCompétencesDabord* campaign – and unlike her opponent Emmanual Macron – right-wing populist *Front National* Candidate Marine Le Pen discussed positive discrimination and its racial basis openly. Claiming in a news broadcast that she did not support positive discrimination, Marine Le Pen denounced the ZEP and other similar initiatives as racist and contrary to the constitutional perspective that France is "one and indivisible." She went on to explain that instituting any positive discrimination program on the basis of ethnicity is instituting a policy of

[148] "#LesCompétencesDabord: Lutter contre les discriminations à l'embauche," Gouvernement.fr, last modified April 19, 2016, http://www.gouvernement.fr/argumentaire/lescompetencesdabord-lutter-contre-les-discriminations-a-l-embauche-4409.

difference on the basis of origin or race.[149] Le Pen refused to shy away from the reality that no other politician would express, and she is still one of the few to do so.

Now that we have established that race does play a factor in positive discrimination programs, consider that implicit racial inequities have always colored the nature and purpose of ZEPs. In terms of the ZEP, such a purpose is not evident on the surface level. Rather, the presence of certain enacted reforms, such as dual-language programs, provide a glimpse at the original program's goal to aid not only those of low-economic status, but of non-French descent.[150] Prime Minister Lionel Jospin clarified this idea in the mid-1990s, when he complained that the students of Seine-Saint-Denis, the predominantly immigrant and minority public housing project of Bouna Traoré and Zyed Benna, deserved more ZEP-status schools than other neighborhoods or communities.[151] An emphasis on the particularly high need of Seine-Saint-Denis continued in the 2006 ZEP renewal, considering 2005 police brutality and riots occurred there. It continued once again in the 2014 ZEP renewal, Seine-Saint-Denis being the only department in which **nine specific emergency measures** were taken to ensure student competence and immediate academic improvement.[152]

Such a persistent focus on this particular public housing project sheds light on what the term 'disadvantaged neighborhood' actually means. Although the twenty-three-page comprehensive region report refuses to speak to the racial and ethnic breakdown of citizens, Seine-Saint-Denis is the French region with the highest concentration of foreigners in the nation.[153, 154] Since France denies the validity of a racial lens through which to examine its

[149] Compagnon, "Présidentielle."
[150] Isambert-Jamati, "Les Choix Éducatifs," 82.
[151] Bénabou et al., "The French zones d'éducation prioritaire," 354.
[152] *Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale*, "La Lutte Contre Les Inégalités Scolaires."
[153] Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques, "Dossier Complet: Département de la Seine-Saint-Denis," March, 23, 2018, https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2011101?geo=DEP-93.
[154] Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'race' and Ethnicity*, 75.

populations, comprehensive statistics are difficult to find. Professor Alain G. Hargreaves nonetheless reveals that foreign children account for nineteen percent of the population, while children living in immigrant-run households account for thirty-eight percent. Assuming that some of the children who grew up in these immigrant households now have homes of their own, the number of foreigners increases. Furthermore, many French nationals from external territories live in Seine-Saint-Denis, providing yet more people of semi-foreign descent not counted among immigrant families.[155] The resultant demographic is a population of foreigners in much higher numbers than Hargreaves could calculate. Thus, the fact that such a neighborhood is a prime target for ZEP reforms suggests a very present program focus on foreign-born citizens, on immigrants, and likely on people of color, despite general government refusal to admit as much.

The conditions surrounding each ZEP renewal further illustrate that ZEP programs have always focused on students in suburban public housing, often students who are both low-income and of non-French descent. This is because prior to every iteration of the ZEP policy, there has been an outbreak of violence in the *banlieue*. This not only suggests that the ZEP is the government's favorite stopgap solution, but also that it is the best the government can do in response to outbreaks of public violence, without drawing into question broader issues of police brutality and general discrimination in relation to race and ethnicity. Sociologist Maurice Lemoine agrees that after every outburst of suburban violence, the French government has taken emergency measures, followed by an enactment of ad hoc solutions that are reactionary, rather than seeking to enact positive, persistent, and systemic change.[156] While most sources attribute the initial creation of ZEPs to Mitterand's efforts and to local or more global policy trends (see

[155] Ibid.

[156] Maurice Lemoine, "Academic failure, social failure: Teaching in the lost suburbs," in *Education in France: Continuity and Change in the Mitterand Years, 1981-1995*, ed. Anne Corbett and Bob Moon (New York: Routledge, 1996), 369.

chapter 3), Researcher Fabien Jobard discusses the ZEP as a policy response to the 1981 public disturbances in and around the Minguettes Estates, a public housing complex just east of Lyon.[157] Colloquially referred to as the 'Hot Summer,' disturbances in Minguettes involved youth from the Estates entering the main city, stealing high-performance cars, and taking them on joyrides near their homes. Teenagers often engaged car chases with other youth or local police, and once they were done, they burned the cars in the streets. By summer's end, 250 cars had gone up in flames, and these types of actions became emblematic of the modern *banlieues* crisis in France, a term inclusive of 2005 rioting and protest, among other incidents involving rash action on the part of local youth and often brutal police responses.[158] Attempting to capitalize on the Hot Summer demonstrations, immigrant youth in surrounding areas mobilized support to pursue beneficial policy changes, just as the new Socialist regime came to power. Efforts were unfortunately disorganized; little progress was made, but one year later, ZEP reforms went into effect in the *banlieues* and beyond.[159] The ZEP relaunch of 1997 came in the aftermath of similar *banlieues* conditions, after a series of riots had plagued an overall turbulent decade in French suburban public housing. Beginning in the Mas du Terreau Project, a three-night confrontation between local youth and police broke out, as youth looted and burned cars, engaged acts of civil disobedience. These actions became a prototype that persisted throughout the 1990s, producing ten to fifteen conflicts in the first half of the century alone.[160] Just before the ZEP renewal, riots broke out in Dammarie-lès-Lys, after police shot and killed a local teenage boy.[161] According to the *Education Prioritaire* website, the ZEP renewal was more

[157] Fabien Jobard, "An Overview of French Riots: 1981-2004, " *Hal Archives*, (2009): 29, https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-00550788/document.
[158] Ibid., 29.
[159] Ibid., 29-30.
[160] Ibid., 30-31.
[161] Ibid., 31.

directly a response to a report from the Ministry of Education's inspector general, entitled "The Determinants of Academic Success in the ZEP." It was the first ZEP program to institute differing levels of aid depending on school need amount of perceived student disadvantage. [162] Although still using vague terminology, the 1997 report still produced a ZEP program more open to establishing greater distinction among communities and therefore students. It is an interesting correlation that such a change occurred in the wake of police brutality and youth rioting in France's predominantly immigrant and minority public housing projects. In 2005, the link between police brutality, riots, and an ensuing ZEP revival strengthened yet again. A report was ordered in 2006 from the inspector general and was entitled "The Contribution of Priority Education to Equality of Opportunity." Shortly after, the government revamped the entire program, adding new distinctions and categories that allowed many more schools to participate in the program and certain schools to receive more funds.[163] Again, this evidence is correlational, but it seems that the report came as a response to the rioting and in turn determined the kinds of changes that should be made to the ZEP program to improve student outcomes. If this is the case in 2006, one can assume that it was perhaps also the case prior to the 1997 ZEP renewal. It is important to note that other policies were leveraged in response to increasing violence, rioting, and police brutality in French suburban housing projects. Still, the ZEP has been a staple policy to combat issues of violence and rioting for a long time, one reason being the fact that the French refuse to view such violence as an issue of discrimination and rather invest in education to act as a future pre-emptive measure.

[162] *Canopé*, "Repères Historiques."
[163] Ibid.

The Problems with an Implicit-Racial Lens

When policies for equitable education have attempted to implicitly aid minorities and bar discrimination, such policies have only incited so much change in the implicit domain. A 2009 *LeFigaro* article highlights this dilemma by describing perspectives of French people of color on positive discrimination programs. In the article, Vice-President of France's *Conseil des associations noires*, a lobby for several black associations, made a statement begging the French government to more openly recognize racial discrimination in public life and policy. He proclaimed the overt, official recognition of racial and ethnic disparity crucial to tackling pervasive issues of discrimination and inequity.[164] The government's new Commissioner of Diversity and Equality of Opportunities agreed, claiming France in a state of apartheid and insisting that measures be put into place to encourage the promotion of blacks and Arabs into business and politics.

The Commissioner was right to be concerned, for policies that have attempted to help disenfranchised minorities indirectly have often experienced somewhat limited success in that arena. Take as an example presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron's campaign argument that the government should provide 15,000 euros to every company. This money would be set aside for the salaries of people coming from disadvantaged neighborhoods. A policy the French originally enacted in 1996 under Prime Minister Alain Juppé, it was rather unsuccessful at producing real, measurable results for people from disadvantaged backgrounds.[165] This is true of other positive discrimination programs, too, now more commonly known as programs for "*Égalité Des Chances*."

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[164] Cécilia Gabizon, "La discrimination positive divise le gouvernment," *LeFigaro*, February 2, 2009, http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2009/02/06/01016-20090206ARTFIG00008-la-discrimination-positive-divise-le-gouvernement-.php.
[165] Compagnon, "Présidentielle."

Programs for equal opportunity have begun to spread in particular among institutions for higher education, often those most competitive and selective. The *Ecole Nationale d'Administration*, or France's most elite public policy graduate program, has created a preparatory class specifically for students of disadvantaged neighborhoods, although the definition of 'disadvantaged' and who this policy actually serves is unclear. All French students take preparatory courses to apply for this type of school; however, this class – like the ZEP program – recognizes the particular needs of disadvantaged students, helping them gain the resources they need to apply successfully to the ENA. Although the ENA website makes it very clear this program exists, the actual success from year to year is unclear, as are the history of the program and its purpose, since the website refuses to characterize exactly which community it serves.[166] *SciencesPo*, another competitive French university, has instituted a similar program. Any French student can apply to this school via competitive examinations, and those with the highest scores are admitted. Recognizing that this tends to limit access among students of low socioeconomic status or non-French descent, *SciencesPo* created a *concours*, or competitive exam, specifically for students from ZEP schools. This program has had moderate success, welcoming four hundred students from ZEP-designated regions between 2001 and 2008.[167, 168] The *SciencesPo* program doubled its enrolment of disadvantaged students, but a low starting number has resulted in a still small population of students from disadvantaged homes in this top-tier university.[169]

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[166] l'ENA, "Classe préparatoire au concours externe d'entrée à l'ENA 'Égalité des chances,'" CP'ENA, Google, accessed November 12, 2017, https://www.ena.fr/Concours-Prepas-Concours/preparer-reussir-concours/Classe-preparatoire-Egalite-des-chances#list_3847.

[167] "Grandes Écoles," *Droit d'Inventaire*, (2008; Paris, France: France 3, 2011), TV episode, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbmKXDLvVYE.

[168] "Les Premiers Pas," *LeMonde*.

[169] "Grandes Écoles," *Droit d'Inventaire*.

The attempts to use positive discrimination in secondary schools and other public institutions have had overall limited, if any, success. An essay by Maurice Lemoine written in the mid-1990s crystalizes this point with his disheartening review of teacher experiences in the *banlieue*, or public housing projects surrounding Paris, Marseille, and other large French cities.[170] Just before the second renewal of the ZEP program, Lemoine discusses the multitude and magnitude of problems facing public schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Typical class sizes are close to thirty students; predominantly French teachers work with pupils of all ethnicities and cultural backgrounds; students are not connected to the cultural and financial world beyond their *banlieue*; and children range in age from eleven to seventeen, as a result of repeated failure and resultant student retention.[171] Lemoine mentions the ZEP policy, first instituted about eight years prior to the writing of his essay, in a manner similar to that of Bénabou et al. In a section entitled, "A Lot of Money but Great Waste," Lemoine notes how ZEPs were designed to provide greater support for students and teachers alike, as well as increase community-school relationships. In practice, however, the programs have thrown money at the problems faced by *banlieue* schools without providing concrete solutions and methods to achieve change. Although in some areas, the programs have been successful, criticisms highlight that money is available, but this does not necessarily provide for the needs of the students, nor the school. Alain Demarche, French secondary school teacher, furthers this claim, explaining that the magnitude of the bureaucracy itself is a hindrance to progress. If a school wants to institute a new program or class, they must make a plan, attend meetings, get principal approval, get regional approval from the general inspector, and final approval from the Ministry in Paris before any money can come back to the school. This process takes anywhere

[170] Lemoine, "Academic failure, social failure," 369.
[171] Ibid, 369-370.

from three to six months.[172] This constitutes a third to more than half of a school year. In addition to such bureaucratic obstacles to innovation and change, geography teacher Marie Ploux notes that ZEP designations have given the impression of change, of improvement, and in some places academic outcomes have improved. This does not trickle down, however, directly or even indirectly to the mind sets and work habits of secondary students. As she explains, "the pupils' relationship with the work hasn't changed."[173] Overall, in the mid-1990s, teachers in ZEP schools expressed feelings of isolation and exhaustion, as already minimal supports deteriorated, understaffing increased, and the chasm between government messages and everyday realities continued to grow.[174] All this leads Lemoine to question whether education reform is enough when the overall infrastructure of suburban housing projects has not changed or been addressed by policymakers.[175] An article from the French Observatoire des Inégalités, or Observatory of Inequality, agrees on this point, claiming that schools and teachers alone cannot bear the burden of equalizing all opportunities for students of disadvantaged backgrounds.[176] The fact that issues impacting disadvantaged neighborhoods have persisted through four ZEP renewals between 1990 and 2014 only reinforces this claim. The article brings up issues ranging from hiring equity, to the increasing employer insistence on a college education or higher among employees, the rise in poverty, to a lack of cultural capital possessed by families already disenfranchised by lacking academic and economic prospects. The article goes further still, claiming that the ZEP program limits resources only to the students most destitute and most underserved, while leaving many

[172] Ibid., 372-373.
[173] Ibid., 372.
[174] Ibid., 373.
[175] Ibid., 369.
[176] *Observatoire des Inégalités*, "L'école peut-elle réduire les inégalités sociales?," last modified December 13, 2013, https://www.inegalites.fr/L-ecole-peut-elle-reduire-les-inegalites-sociales.

still without the proper resources they need to successfully pursue a higher education or other career path.[177]

Conclusion

It is thus a combination of positive and negative factors that led policymakers to reenact the ZEP program following the police brutality and riots of 2005. Positive discrimination is controversial in France, but not nearly as controversial as it would be to admit fault for discrimination on the basis of race. By reviving a public education reform in 2006 policy, French officials missed another opportunity to address and discuss the stigmatization and discrimination present in their society, which stems from a once intentional separation of immigrants, particularly those of African descent, from the French public at-large.

From one perspective, the ZEP policy expanded the mission of previous education policies that promoted the *école unique* through nationally standardized curriculum, funding, and state tests. The ZEP program and Back-to-Basics took it a step further, even, pushing for equal opportunities for success among students of low socio-economic and (implicitly) inferior racial status. The ZEP program marked the beginning of rhetoric the promoted positive discrimination. This rhetoric has risen and fallen in importance among policymakers over the years. And despite a sometimes-lacking discussion of racial and gender inequity, overt recognition of disparity in the caliber of schools across neighborhoods was and is a huge step in the right direction. ZEPs were the first program to work to shrink that disparity by granting suburban schools the right to tailor curriculum and add resources that benefited their student demographic. The national government reallocated funds so that schools with a priority-zone designation could achieve this goal, which more broadly represented a goal of providing equal opportunity for academic and

[177] Ibid.

career achievement through more equitable schooling practices. Ultimately, the ZEP program marked national recognition of inequities among French students, as well as a desire to do something about the inequities experienced specifically by society's most disadvantaged members.[178]

From another perspective, an increased investment in public education was an investment in community buy-in: if the French government could instill in children and parents a collective French identity – a desire to participate in mainstream society through improved and effective schools – then the pathway to individual student success could double as a pathway to assimilation and suburban-neighborhood improvement. In other words, if the ZEP worked, not only individual students, but entire communities could improve their quality of life through an alignment with French values and an understanding of the importance of education. There is an insistence on assimilation, a desire to use education as not only a tool for individual uplift but also community integration. From a Platonian perspective, this is merely a means to use education and not policy as the key to establishing and maintaining a functional society.[179] ZEPs both protected and championed the individual and citizen supported by Rousseau and Dewey, while supporting the societal framework supported by Plato. According to 2006 Ministry Official, if the education system fell apart, so, too, would France's Republic.[180] Thus, school reforms became a reasonable solution to *banlieues* community problems. In a modern context, however, and because race and immigration status were never directly mentioned following a situation that was relevant to a history of anti-immigrant sentiment and violence in France, these seemingly helpful ideas instead partially overshadow what I believe to be a more relevant

[178] Ibid.
[179] Plato, *The Republic*, 47.
[180] Hendrie, "In the Wake of Riots."

conversation. Scholar Maboula Soumahoro agrees that a revival of ZEPs does not address the complexity of the issues at hand in an open and public manner.[181]

With these ideas in mind, it is easy to understand why the French government returned to the ZEP policy in 2006 in light of youth riot and protest: the ZEP was designed to help youth of marginalized identities, adolescents who were poor and often of recent immigrant descent. These are exactly the students who died, who rioted, who felt trapped in dismal suburbs.[182] It is equally easy to understand Soumahoro's reaction, particularly since she is a scholar of color, of African descent, and of French origins. As always, the new ZEP program did not directly address the fact that many students living in impoverished suburban neighborhoods were of immigrant, often African origins. Scholars have since intimated this fact without clearly implicating race, the language often more focused on vague and undefined terms, such as low economic status or general disadvantage as leading causes for disparities in educational opportunity.

Perhaps, when it came to the question of immigrants, of *bidonvilles*, of the poor and rich, the French government chose education to serve not only as a tool for assimilation but a tool to equalize opportunity. This is not necessarily a surprising choice, as making education a tool for uplift and assimilation did not require the actual integration of housing across income, racial, and religious lines. It is important to remember that although schools may have improved, public housing projects like Clichy-Sous-Bois still exist, police brutality in such neighborhoods still exists, general public opinion towards slums and the people in them has not much changed in seventy years, as was evidenced by the similarity of media responses in both the Peyssonel and 2005 riot cases.[183] In 2005, the goal of uplift through policies for education stood in the place of

[181] Soumahoro, "On the Test," 53.
[182] Chrisafis, "Nothing's Changed."
[183] Nasiali, "Ordering the Disorderly Slum," 1026.

uplift through an honest and committed attempt at integration. This sentiment captures the legacy of democratic education and undemocratic housing strategies among immigrant populations. In other words, much work has been done, and much work remains. For things to truly change – for the school system to promote truly equal chance – I think the French need to place an open emphasis and enact policies to fulfill the needs of economically- *and* racially-disadvantaged students.

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Biography

Megan L. Silver has always loved the University of Texas at Austin and is thrilled to be a soon-to-be UT graduate. She is graduating with a B.A. in Plan II and French and a certificate in Early Childhood Intervention. During her time in college, Ms. Silver participated in the Plan II/KiPP Partnership and was a member of The Guides of Texas. She also enjoyed mentoring a local Austin middle schooler and learning about social justice and identity politics through different Austin volunteer opportunities. She studied abroad in Lyon, France in the spring of her junior year. This Summer, Ms. Silver will be teaching a 2-year-old class at a preschool summer camp. In the Fall, she will be returning to France – the Bordeaux Region – to work as an assistante de langue in a public elementary-school classroom. Hopefully, she will be able to evaluate the impacts of her research on-site in the French public-school setting.